



via pacis

(the way of peace)
Des Moines Catholic Worker
Volume 2 number 9
December 1978

A LETTER FROM FR. JOHN

Dear Catholic Worker friends,

Last July I bade farewell to Holy Trinity Parish and the Catholic Worker. Now I am pastor of three mission parishes in the hills of Northern Georgia. I've volunteered to work with Glenmary Home Missioners for three years.

In many ways ministry here is different--rural poverty, isolation, lack of support communities, etc. Yet, mostly, ministry is the same. Here too is the need for personalism to offset the impersonal corporate employers who operate the textile mills and other labor-intensive industries. Wages are low, working conditions are poor. Agrarian reform is needed to permit simple country folk to live peaceably and productively on the land. And peace--in the immediate area are a military college and an Army camp for training Rangers. So, Gospel-living is a challenge here as anywhere. Somehow it seems easier tho with the awesome beauty of the hills. It's so much easier to live in concert with nature when beauty is always before your eyes.

I think kindly of you all. Recommend me and the work here to the Lord.

Peace,
John Zeitler

ST. LUKE CHURCH
301 HAWKINS
DAHLONEGA, GEORGIA 30533



Discussions

The liturgy is celebrated every Friday at the house (713 Indiana, one block north of University beginning at 8 p.m., followed by a discussion.

January 5: The Future of Religious Women's Communities: Sr. Mary Dingman

January 12: Slide program on New Guinea; Fr. Swift, Maryknoll priest

January 19: Organic Farming and Self Sufficiency; Al and Mary Razor

January 26: The Role of Direct Action in Social Justice; Catholic Worker staff and friends

February 2: not yet scheduled

February 9: American Friends Service Committee Hunger and Human Needs Program; Mary Berg

February 16: Birthday party for Frank

February 23: still not scheduled

March 2nd: Sexuality and Human Growth; Nick Tormey

JANUARY THAW

THE NUCLEAR CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIAN CONCERN--The implications of the Christian faith in the age of nuclear technology, a real threat to all life forms. Jacquee Dickey, Catholic Worker House

CONTEMPORARY VOICES ADDRESSING THE CHURCH--This course will focus on the voices of Black, Feminist, and Latin theologies addressing the American church. Rev. Hugh Stone, United Methodist Church, Mitchellville and Santiago.

These are just two of a score of classes which will be available as part of the January Thaw program January 16-February 1. For further information contact:

Rev. Paul Axness, Grand View College
Des Moines 50316, 266-2651.

via pacis is published by the Des Moines Catholic Worker Community, Box 4551, Des Moines, Iowa 50306 (515) 243-0765. Subscriptions are free upon request. Community: Frank Cordaro, Jacquee Dickey, Betty Goodnough, Jack Smith, and Steve Marsden.

via pacis

ON HOSPITALITY

AT ADVENT

by Jacquee Dickey

1978--Jesus do you know we have glamorized you in your tinsel manger, and sell you in Saks Fifth Avenue packages?

You're no longer the star of the show

You've been pre-empted by a red-suited double-talker
selling Farrah-Fawcett dolls and electric donut-makers and
grab-it-while-you-can-inflation's-on-the-way consumerism.

After all your coming wasn't showy enough to hold our attention.

I mean, come on, you were born in a stable? No neon lights
no TV cameras "KING OF JEWS BORN LAST NIGHT IN A BARN" ?

Besides your advent was an historical event. We live in a
technological society, things are more complicated.

Do you expect us to take you seriously?

"Feed the hungry clothe the naked"

I'm tired of my tax dollars going to welfare bums

"Love your enemies do good to those who persecute you"

Those Commies can't be trusted. Love them? They aren't even
human. That's why we need nuclear overkill--to make sure those
barbarians are good 'n dead.

I mean let's be honest, Jesus, we live in the *REAL* world.....

But here at the Worker, you don't buy that line, Jesus.

You strip yourself of 20th-century plastic and open our
hearts again to the starkness of that byre.

You come to us as Diane, attempted suicide twice in one month.

Her mother: too bad it didn't work. . .

Edie, an elderly woman in the way of her relatives' vacation to
Florida so they ask her to leave. . .

Sam, a Cheyenne Sioux 7 years in the pen for a crime he didn't commit
his body massive chisled artistically out of stone. He cradles
his young daughter in his arms with the feminine
tenderness of your own Mothermary.

You bring us ugly realities to humble us and empty us of trappings.

No, Jesus, it is not us who prepare for your birth.

It is you who prepare for our birth. Amen.

*The Catholic Worker Community wishes to thank all those
who have given of their time, money, and gifts
to make this Christmas a meaningful one of love and hope to us.*



Derelict?

by Betty Goodnough

It happened awhile ago, but I have not forgotten. How could I?

It was a warm summer evening, early, and we were gathered on the front porch, guests and staff alike. Those who had not finished dessert had brought their dishes of ice cream with them, gift of a thoughtful friend. Others had seated themselves on the steps, a few on the porch railing, the children quieted and replete, their teasing eased by the evening meal. The air was filled with conversation and conviviality, the hum broken now and then by the exchange of good natured banter.

He came up the sidewalk, a slight man, walking with the intensity of need and anxiety, now climbing the steps to thread his way through those who had come before him. As he made his way to the couch where we were seated, he had eyes for no one except the man to whom he had come for help. And then, there he stood, gaunt and frail, skin darkened by exposure, face prematurely lined by years without care, dressed in dark trousers and a shirt surprisingly clean.

In a voice harsh with strain, breathless from the long and stressful trek made from obscene river bottoms where human debris mingles in its abandonment with inanimate refuse, he said:

"Hello, Frank. Frank, I gotta have something to eat."

Frank slowed a mouthful of ice cream on its way to his mouth.

"But you know we eat at six and it's a quarter to seven now."

"I know, I know," he said, desperately. "But I started out in time, Frank. Honest, I did, but this guy-- I met him on the way. He wouldn't let me alone. He kept pushin' me and, then, he hit me here," as he clutched his lower chest with hands, shaking and dirty. "He hit me real hard, Frank. He knocked me down and he kicked me. It hurts awful."

There was a slight pause. And Frank replied: "Well, if you can find someone to fix it for you, you can have something to eat."

I got up and spoke to our guest, "Come, I'll get you something."



In the kitchen others were engaged in the after-dinner cleaning-up process. I had only recently arrived at the house to take over the evening watch and I had no idea what I could gather together for a hastily assembled meal, knowing well from past experience that the left-overs of a repast for fifteen would be scant. A hurried examination of the refrigerator confirmed my fears: a small container of creamed broccoli and the remnants of a green salad remained. Knowing that our guest ought to have warm food in his digestive system, I hurried to the basement and found there a can of beans which could be heated, along with the broccoli. There was bread and margarine and, luckily, hot coffee. Shortly at the dining table I seated our waiting guest, who fell silently to the nourishment he had come so far and so hazardously to find.

I rejoined the clatter and hum in the kitchen, not sharing in the gossip and laughter prevailing there, scarcely aware of the food I tended on the stove but preoccupied with my thoughts of the man who ate in the other room. What circumstances of tragedy, of exploitation, what errors of judgment coupled with human frailty had converged to bring about this tattered, frail shell of one who, in his need, had found his way to us for help?

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fool for Christ

(Joe DaVia, co-founder of the Des Moines Catholic Worker and editor of via pacis for the first 21 issues, left Des Moines November 19th to become assistant campus minister at the Lansing Newman Centre in Lansing, Michigan. His views on the Des Moines Catholic Worker experience were recorded at the midwest Catholic Worker conference by the former editor of via pacis, Joe DaVia. --ed.'s note)



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I returned to the dining table, bringing with me the remaining food. I stood beside him and he hesitated in his eating as I replenished his plate. Momentarily, he looked up to say, "Thank you", and I looked down into eyes great and shimmering, arresting me in their torture and pain. In that moment they became, miraculously, the eyes of another one, pain-filled and anguished: the eyes of a beloved brother whose name is Christ.

I turned away from that poignant encounter, a flood of gratitude encompassing my heart; in a fleeting moment I knew the joyful privilege that I had been there. It was a moment of experience, unique, isolated, suspended in time, perhaps not to occur again in just that context. 'For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me.' Matt. 25: 35-40.

via pacis: It's been over two years since the Des Moines Catholic Worker House opened.

What were the early days like?

DaVia: We started doing hospitality after about only ten days in the 713 Indiana house. Sonny and I only met maybe four times before we opened, and I'd only spent about five days at a Catholic Worker before. I was the "house mother" while Sonny brought in money as a community organizer. I was poorly equipped in Worker philosophy. I remember calling the Milwaukee house when I couldn't decide if it was kosher to accept government commodities as donations.

Q: How is it different now than then?

A: Obviously, our sights are higher. Then we had enough with two staff people. Now, with two houses and a reputation for helping folks, Sonny (Frank), Jacquee, Butch, and Betty are strained to the limits to do all the essential work. The extended community has changed a lot too, but they have always helped us do resistance work by watching the house for us.

Q: Through the issues of via pacis, we get an idea of how personalities have operated the houses, but you need to read between the lines. What's it really like?

A: Jesus said: "Love your enemies..." Loving strangers, guests, and the folks that hassle us at demonstrations is easy; we don't have to face them every day. It's loving members of the community, in spite of, no, because of their limitations and mine that is hardest. Sonny (Frank) is brilliant, but demanding;

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Jacquee has visions and perspectives on the future of the community, but is hard on herself when these don't happen fast enough. Betty is special, a patient woman, warm and better able to pace herself than the rest of us who tend to burn out easily.

Q: It seems funny that we never hear those things from any Worker houses. Mostly it's the philosophies, but not the real portraits about the people who do it.



A: There's a danger in bragging about "I've got a corner on the truth." Somehow if we tell too much about us we're self serving. But we aren't philosophies, we're human people, who come to the Worker for mixed motives. People...I felt obligated in *via pacis* to make an account of some of the people we've known. We read the obituaries of former heads of state and entertainers daily. So I felt obliged to write about Velma, Pops, and Rick, guests and friends, when they died.

Q: You bring up an important point about the editorial vision of the newsletter. Can you expand on that?

A: In a second grade religion book, I remember seeing a picture of two children, a boy and a girl, facing a fork in the road. One path was landscaped with lollypop trees and a gumdrop walk to a merry-go-round, with Satan inviting the children to take the easy road. The other road was rocky, and filled with pot holes, and Jesus beckoned the kids to come and follow.

More with the Worker than with other movements in the Church I've become acquainted with does that picture make sense. The road paved with new cars, a comfortable life, a new home in suburbia, and ignorance of the works of mercy is damn easy to follow, especially for me. The road to Jesus, and to

"is vision of Justive & Peace is cluttered with arrests of yourself and loved ones, boycotting food you really like when there's a reaspm. and holding poor paying jobs because in general these exploit the fewest people. As I see it, this is the way of peace, *via pacis* in Latin.

(By the way, *via pacis* has nothing to do with my last name: DaVia. The former is never capitalized, the latter always is.)

Q: That seems like a good place to end a short interview. Is there anything else you want to say?

A: Mostly thanks to the people here, who provided the soil to help transform a radio station public relations manager into a wobbly poet, a novice mime, and lay minister--servant of the Church. Gracias, to Frank, Jacquee, Betty, Eddy Polich; Malcolm, Drury and Leith MacKenzie; Mary McCann, Mary Pat Sullivan, Bart & Nat Pollock, Jerry McMahon; John Zeitler, Mike Smith, Ann Deitchman, Kate & Kevin Miller, Steve Marsden, Jack Smith, and Eve Kavanagh, to mention only those most closely related to the house in these 27 months. To the many others: Muchas, Muchas Gracias.

Joe's new address:

308½ North Fairview
Lansing, Michigan 48912
(517) 485-1861

Rural Needs:

By Gerard McMahon

Does a staff member at a community health center in Epes, Alabama, and an Iowa farmer who loses almost two bushels of topsoil for every bushel of corn produced have anything in common with an urban-dominated "peace" coalition of religious and lay people?

Such pressing rural needs as soil conservation and health care indicate that the quality of rural life is adversely affected by a notion of security that has justified the diversion of trillions of dollars for armaments since World War II.

The irony of large military budgets is not merely that funds are diverted from human services but that the dollars involved generate fewer jobs. Every \$1 billion that would have been spent on the now defunct B-1 bomber project would have generated 22,000 jobs, for example, while the same \$1 billion spent for health care would generate 46,000 jobs.

Fallout of the Arms Race

The Mobilization for Survival, a coalition that focuses on ending the arms race and using the money saved to meet human needs, maintains that rural problems like this are directly linked to expenditures on armaments and that they won't be solved until national security is redefined.

Two related themes emerged at a recent Mobilization meeting in Des Moines. One is that the non-stop buildup of nuclear weapons, which drains off billions of dollars for an uneasy security based on the threat of mass destruction, threatens this planet as never before. The other is that this pursuit of military security drains off resources needed for immediate human needs of millions who are unemployed, lack access to adequate health care, and face growing environmental deterioration.

Neither the coalition nor its goals have had much support in rural areas. Allies for peace-related causes from mainline Christian churches traditionally have come from urban areas. However the arguments that urban dwellers are better able to detect weaknesses in the traditional militaristic rationales for defense expenditures, or that they have more pressing needs than their rural counterparts, are becoming harder to substantiate.

The United States is now in a position where topsoil losses from wind and water erosion are greater than they were during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s.

Soil moving off the land often carries animal wastes, fertilizer, and pesticides with it. A 1975 study showed that all of Iowa's major waterways were contaminated by pesticides. Farm-related pollution in two-thirds of the nation's river basins is making it extremely difficult to carry out the federal mandate to make U.S. rivers "fishable and swimmable" by 1983.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that adequate treatment of non-point sources of agricultural pollution may cost as much as \$10 billion. While this is a lot of money, it is less than one-third the estimated cost of the proposed M-X missile system.

The number of doctors in most rural counties has steadily declined. Although some 31 percent of the people live in rural areas, they are served by only 12 percent of the nation's doctors. Community health centers offer the best possibility to many rural residents for access to comprehensive, quality health care.

Thus the issue of "peace conversion," which is the transfer of jobs and funding from the military to other sectors such as health care, is of more than passing interest to those who work at, and are served by, community health centers in such places as Epes, Alabama.

Despite the nearly \$2 trillion spent for national security since 1945, Americans are faced with a greater likelihood of nuclear disaster than ever before. Basing security on the capacity for global destruction has made us hostage to a military blueprint for security and our own insecurities. Projects and people crucial to a healthy, secure society, as a result, have been ignored.

Perhaps rural and urban people will come to realize, along with Mayor Coleman Young of Detroit, that the nation's greatest weakness is the poverty and degradation of many of its people and that security must be defined in terms of social systems that sustain human dignity and environmental integrity. Soil conservation projects and community health centers are not starved for funds because the nation lacks resources. They lack support because of misguided priorities and a lack of national will.

Rural people certainly understand what soil erosion and inadequate health care are all about. Perhaps when it is realized that these conditions are not the inevitable fulfillment of our destinies as rural people but the direct consequence of an ill-conceived notion of what "security" is, they will be more willing to join with others in reordering national priorities and redefining security in a way that makes sense.

by Rev. Sandy Charles

When Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers," he was very much in earnest. He wasn't coining a neat phrase or promoting a slogan for his religious campaign to be Israel's King--as a politician might do in our day--Jesus was introducing a new political and spiritual order called the Kingdom of God. Jesus was sent to give us a message of peace--an idea of peace going beyond the Old Testament idea of an eye for an eye or tit for tat. The Kingdom of God is defined as peace. God's rule is peace. God's expectations are peaceful. When the reign of God is firmly fixed in human affairs war, strife and hostility will not continue. Jesus' coming points us to this greater hope in this life and the next.

Peace has many shades of meaning. It means unity and good-will among human beings. It means unity and reconciliation with God. It means freedom from anguish, violence and war. All of these meanings for peace are tied together, however--for to have peace with God and with each other hostility and war and grasping selfishness must cease. We live on too small a planet in this day and age to find a retreat where inner peace can be attained for very long. The anguish and anxiety of the outer world comes crashing in on our retreat with all of its confusion and discord. As Christians we have no choice but to deal with the political order. The political arena affects the quality and the spirituality of our lives and there is no retreat from that fact. Spiritual integrity and political integrity go together.

In Psalm 34 we hear the psalmist say that God holds pre-eminence and authority over all of life. In other words, God is in charge. Our ultimate safety and security lie in placing ourselves in God's hands and helping to work out God's plans and purposes of peace. But we are afraid. God's promises are real, yet we put our trust in affluence and weapons--money and bombs.

"Seek Peace,

Psalm 34:1-1



We have built enough weapons to kill the world many times over, but we continue to add billions of dollars to our defense budget every year.

President Eisenhower said in 1953, "Every gun that is made, every warship that is launched, every rocket fired signifies, in a final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its laborers, the genius of its scientists, the hope of its children"----

I was in the sixth grade when the Sputnik went up, and I remember so well the hysteria it generated. Our teacher encouraged us to study science and math all the harder so we poor sixth graders could produce the technology to save ourselves. Do you remember the air raid drills of that era? We were marched into the halls--made to crouch next to the wall with our hands over our eyes and our fingers in our ears--who were they kidding? We at 12 and 13 knew that wasn't going to save us. I had horrible nightmares of fire and of death and of destruction.

In a survey taken in Japan, fifth and sixth graders were asked, "Do you think humanity will perish in your lifetime?" The answer was overwhelmingly, "yes".

and Pursue It"

James 3:13 4:10

We have created a generation of people who believe there is no future. They live that out either consciously or unconsciously. Look around you at the hedonistic lifestyles--"grab all the gusto", "eat drink and be merry" for tomorrow--we may all literally die.

If there is a nuclear war no one will win. Everything that counts in life will be destroyed. For the last thirty or more years the U.S. has had a military based economy and we have slowly become arms peddlers to the world. The American values that we all hold dear are being sold short, undermined, in order to keep us powerful and in order to keep us rich. Since 1960, the U.S. has sold over \$90 billion worth of death machinery abroad, a sum far greater than all the foreign aid extended by us to the poor nations. We are even producing and exporting instruments of torture to oppressive governments overseas. In 1976, \$25 billion was spent a year for military research. The U.S. Department of Defense outspends the total annual budget of the U.N. World Food Program every 14 hours. Clearly something is desperately wrong with our priorities.

On November 17th, while talking with a group of U.S. senators, Soviet leader, Leonid Brezhnev, acknowledged that in a nuclear war there would be no winners. He went on to say that the U.S.S.R. will "not let the missiles fly first." He advocated settling our problems in a peaceful way. Most of us probably don't believe that he means it. Why? Have we been taught so long to see the Communists as enemies that we can't see the Russians as people who want to have a future for their children as much as we want a future for ours? How will nuclear destruction benefit them any more than it will us? Maybe it is time to take the Russians expressed wishes for peace seriously and negotiate accordingly.

December, 1978

I am not asking you to adopt my world views on the basis of my opinions and judgments. What I am asking you to do is not to take this problem of peace and the threat of war lightly, nor to run away from it. Many people feel that time is running out for us, and the more intense the arms race becomes, the higher the chances for the buttons to be pushed.

Please be willing to question the accuracy and truth of the information we get through "official" channels. Look for data from many sources--read--talk to people--think Biblically. Look closely at the language that is being used. Remember a couple of phrases from the Vietnam era: "The only way to save the city is to destroy it" -- "We were told to waste the area, so we killed them." The age of double-think and double-talk is here--

Incursion is an invasion

Protective reaction is bombing

Body counts represent dead people

Liquidate means kill

We don't have to hold PhD's to cut through the flim flam of polluted language and public relations jargon to get at the central questions. We live in an period when governmental deception is a high art. I am continually amazed when I go around giving seminars and presentations to church members and groups to find that in the post-Watergate era they'd rather believe their government than their church on research on social and political issues.

Our mission of building peace should ask us (as a minimum) to seek peace and speak the truth. Certainly, Jesus did that. The Bible calls us to do no less.

How can a Christian work for change and find peaceful solutions to social problems?

1. Study and understand the problems in our country that affect other people in the world.

2. Study and understand some of the greatest threats to civilization, such as nuclear holocaust, starvation, environmental problems, inflation, etc.

blindman

by Joe DaVia

Like a blindman, I am walking
without a cane, a sole voice is talking
guiding through a foreign field at night
To you, this field is familiar
I'm hesitating, slowly, still you're
plodding through this old corn field at night.

The walk only began the meeting
strolling now, our souls are greeting
each other, lonely pilgrims in life's fields
sharing trials and indecision
hoping for a stronger vision
grasping for decision in these fields.

If the future were only sure
one true direction, something pure
a solitary, central purpose for our being.
we'd follow the one beaten pass
look at a tree, but follow the grass
forsaking all for the grasping of our being.

This field, here, is without direction
a broad expanse, and on inspection
composed of many things, both great and small
a natural sampler of God's creation
crickets and corn, and more distant relations
in the universe of the field, great, yet small.

The road is not my place in time
but the broad field is, in a moderate clime
without direction, but where, then will I go?
Like a caneless blindman I will hear
a stranger's voice, a friend so dear
directing a fielding pilgrim where to go,
showing this fielding pilgrim where to go.

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3. Get the best people in seats of power and hold them accountable.

4. Read about, study and understand the attitudes of other Americans and other peoples of the world.

5. Struggle hard and long with what justice means in an interdependent world. How am I my brother's keeper? How am I my sister's keeper?

Since I quoted Eisenhower earlier, it somehow seems fitting to wind up with a quote from his contemporary, Adlai Stevenson. "We all travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable supplies of air and soil; all

committed for our safety to its security and peace, preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and I will say--the love--we give our fragile craft."

The source of that love Stevenson is referring to is God in Christ Jesus. As it says in James 3, "Goodness is the harvest that is produced from the seeds that peacemakers plant in peace." God needs our seeds of love and understanding to provide us with a peaceful future. We need to think --pray--act--and do, Seek peace--pursue peace. "Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God."

via pacis



Daniel Berrigan: A THEOLOGY OF RESISTANCE

Last week Fr. Dan Berrigan was in Des Moines. His one appearance at Dowligh High School brought together more than 300 folks to listen to the update of ten years since Catonsville. The first half of the program Dan appeared as himself in a readers' theatre edition of *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*. The second half of the program Dan talked to us about the living historical event of Catonsville ten years after the fact. It is living history because he, himself, and hundreds of other Americans are actively risking jail in similar civil disobedience acts in the growing resistance movement against nuclear technology and for all life with a future.

Dan, who had just gotten off a plane from Texas, had the day before gone through the LBJ Memorial Library where every conceivable relic of the late President has been enshrined. That experience brought to mind for him the difference between nostalgia and remembering. The LBJ Memorial Library is an example of America's obsession with nostalgia. LBJ is enshrined there, pharaoh's tomb without a future, no connection with the present except in denial. A visitor to the memorial is inundated with thousands of useless facts and statistics about the late President without any real encounter with the man and his times. An encounter very much needed today lest we continue to make the same macho mistakes that LBJ's presidency made.


Dan then told us that the play *The Trial of the Catonsville Nine*, unlike the LBJ Memorial is truly an act of remembering. Remembering in the Old Testament Biblical sense. The re-enacting of the Catonsville play brings to mind the event of ten years past that brought nine Catholics together outside a selective service office to burn with homemade napalm some 378 1-A draft files. The play through its narration put that singular act into context with the nine lives that took part in the action. This play was *not* an act of nostalgia,

a mere recalling of a dead past. It was a play of challenge--remembering an event ten years past that lives on in the many hundreds of others who today continue to resist those same powers of destruction and death that prompted the Catonsville nine to act.

Dan gave us a theology of resistance that he and others have been living out since Catonsville. It is a theology of sacrament, filled with the idea of the Word of God incarnate in deed through a faithful community. It is a theology of a here and now seeing evil for what it is, of the then Vietnam War, of the now nuclear arms race. It is a theology of prophetic, Godly action that exposes evil with truth, of the then burning of draft files (*"Our apologies good friends for the fracture of good order, the burning of paper instead of children*

...we could not, so help us God, do otherwise, for we are sick at heart, our hearts give us no rest, for thinking of the Land of Burning Children."), and of the now spilling of Blood, the symbol of life wasted, at the Pentagon--the Temple of Death. It is a theology of hopeful future, not in the history of humanity, but in the Christological history of God and human.

Dan Berrigan did not leave us with many answers for our own personal situations, but perhaps he gave us some touchstones to guide us on our way: the need to be freed-up to act; the need to be personally (bodily) involved; the need to be real here and now in our actions; the need for community in order to act; the need for hope and mostly the need for prayer.

Dan's visit for us at the Catholic Worker has meant a great deal. We only wish you all could have shared in the personal conversations we were blessed to have, especially the ones on prayer and community. Hopefully our lives and actions in the months to come will reflect our encounter with Dan--our friend.  Frank Cordaro

The Death Of All Flesh

Frank wrote this article at the mid-west regional Catholic Worker retreat held at Sugar Creek November 10-12. He stayed up most of the night arguing about it with Michael Garvey from the Davenport Worker House.

Not long ago I had a dream. I dreamed that myself and a few others survived a nuclear war. Among those left were a few close friends of mine. I remember feeling very blessed to have been able to share those final moments with close friends. I don't remember saying anything in particular though I felt a sense of *completedness* being with them. It was as if we had already said all there was to say to each other. We were just waiting. One of my friends, Bob Beck, stood out in my mind most vividly. Whenever Bob and I get together we talk at great length on an issue. We exhaust all possible areas of conversation on the subject. Our encounters often seem to be fruitful. In my dream I had the same sense of completedness of conversation and clarity of mind as we talked about our situation, but as our silence grew I began to sense a creeping tint of perversion. The completedness of our shared final moments turned sour as our skins began to turn yellow with the rise in radio-activity around us. I then woke up.

I don't remember many dreams but this one stuck with me. It was good to be with friends. Dying is such a lonely event. It is a blessing to have loved ones near you at that time. But the death that we faced together was not just our personal deaths. This death was different from any other death since the beginning of time. What can it possibly mean for humanity to face *complete DEATH*? It is one thing to die as an individual, leaving behind you loved ones, your children, your way of life; or to die in great numbers, as in war or natural catastrophe. Even at that the rest of humanity goes on. But for humanity as a

whole to destroy itself raises a question of a qualitatively different level than that of individual death. Perhaps the experience of our American Indian and the European Jew can help us come to grips with what the "final solution" may mean for all humanity. The destruction of the American Indian wiped out a whole race of people from the face of this earth--a segment of our human collective consciousness now no longer conscious. The American Indians' extinction as a viable culture has left us with a real sense of amputation on our conscious level. The few remaining American Indians are living ghosts. They are alive today though their living roots have been cut dead. We are less human because of their extinction. What ever the American Indian had to offer the rest of us we must regain in our subconscious.

Modern Jews know what the near completed "final solution" of Hitler's Nazism could have meant for them. To be a Jew is to be able to remember. It is an active remembering that the history of God's saving actions becomes real for them today. The pass-over meal is the modern day Jews' existential sharing in the same redemptive moment when God called the Jews out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Through the shared collective memory of the crossing of the Red Sea, all Jews today can claim the chosenness of what it means to be a Jew. Hitler's "final solution" sought to do away with all Jews and therefore destroy for ever their living collective consciousness. If Hitler had completed his plan there would be no visible conscious people of God. If the people of the Old Testament were allowed to become extinct, Jesus would have no living content and therefore would be rendered ineffective.

The extinction of whole peoples and their cultures are almost unrecoverable. As one part of the

human consciousness is destroyed the other parts suffer. With a study of Carl Jung one could say that the individual's identity draws from a larger collective consciousness. In the past as one whole culture and its collective consciousness was lost, it is slowly retained in some form through our sub-consciousness. For example, as the primitive people passed from a matriarchal society to a patriarchal society much of their sub-consciousness helped to hold both consciousnesses in balance. In this way nothing is lost though much good is hidden. It is this balancing between the sub-conscious and the conscious that keeps us human beings. The individual's sub-conscious and conscious draws its authenticity from the collective consciousness of past and present peoples. When this balance of sub-conscious and conscious and collective consciousness is off we border on madness. Today we seem to be crossing the line into madness, the madness of mass suicide.

What are the implications of the total extinction of humanity? This is *not* an academic question. It is within our capability to destroy the whole human race through a nuclear war. Even if hundreds or thousands of people survive, how long could they last on a hot planet (N. Shute, *On the Beach*)? The results of a nuclear war would not only destroy all living people's consciousness through mass murder, but it would also destroy all past and present collective consciousness through memory wipe out. If there are people left after such a war they would not be people because they would have no memory to build on and their world would no longer resemble our world. The modern philosophy of existentialism could be called a philosophy of suicide. With the nuclear technology that we have today we are now the last generation -- the age of total human suicide. What meaning could Jesus have on the other side of a nuclear war? I don't believe there

is meaning on the other side, much less Jesus' meaning. How could there be? With no history, no consciousness, no world ; there is no humanity, no need for Jesus.

Faced with this sombering reality, knowing that it is just a short matter of time before a nuclear conflict (the Lauch Foundation's study on the probability of nuclear conflict by 1999 gives children who are four or under five chances out of a thousand of reaching the age of maturity) what are we to do? Jim Douglass, speaking in Dubuque last year, said that he has no faith in humanity, but that he did believe in people. We believers need to deal with the truth of this statement and live our lives accordingly. Faith in Jesus the Christ can not mean faith in a human kingdom on this planet. If not in scripture, then at least our own secular times tells us that there is no future for humanity. If all of Western thought can be seen as a development, then we have developed an inertia towards total suicide with the technology to follow it through. We live in a death wish society that is moving at a great speed to its final completion. With Jesus there is also a fascination with death. But Jesus' dealings with death is qualitatively different from our society's dealings with death. Modern humanity's death wish stems from its over riding need to deny death in its illusory reach for immortality (*Denial of Death*, Becker). Jesus calls us to live through our individual death. "If a person wishes to come after me, they must deny their very self, take up their cross, and follow in my steps. Whoever would preserve their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for my sake and the gospel's will preserve it." Mark 8: 34-35. The difference is that with Jesus we know that death has a claim on our lives, but only the life that is to die with the world. The life we share with and in Jesus starts in this world and carries us through the ineffable

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A LETTER FROM J.

We received this letter from J. Dudgeon while he was serving one month for truth witness in D.C. with the Jonah House Community.

Franko

well, it seems that if i'm not doing poorly at avoiding trouble, i'm heading right into it. i guess everyone's got to be good at something.

at the trial coming out of the 3rd session, hizhonor was, as usual, generous with his time (3 hours) and with mine (30 days). the only thing i really can recall as high points were 1) it was boring 2) hizhonor winked twice at the prosecution 3) i asked to go to the bathroom once.

it's that time of the week again & i can only describe it as such.

by all signs, it's sunday morning! the flocks of preachers have descended upon the place like so many birds (vultures most likely). they're the species whose specialty is 5 minute salvation. they'll talk to one of the brothers for about 90 seconds, leave a bible with instructions to read the 1st chapter of genesis and then leave for the next block to get a few others started. returning about 5 minutes later, they ask "whatdidyathink" (all one word), read a few passages of john, ask if you've been saved, ask if you want to be saved...and in a short few seconds, lo & behold, you are saved. ther's then a handshake with the words "you've just been given eternal life." as our friend the preacher hungrily writes down the brother's name in his notebook, he adds "...and you need do nothing but proclaim lord jesus highest of high in your prayers..." his holiness then puts a check by the brothers name, shakes his hand for one furiously happy moment and then, moving down the hall to his next prey, parts with the benediction "you'll be getting a little something in the mail." as his vboice comes once again booming from down the hall with that immortal word "whatdidyathink", i sit thinking that on the part of the preacher, this is one of the sick-

est forms of self gratification i've ever witnessed.

the time here passes slowly--but not without reward. i'm getting in a lot of reading, writing and exercise (265 lengths of the cell-block equals one mile). dick mc sorley was in yesterday with a bit of bread and wine for a eqcharist. it's boring as hell--but i guess i can take even that for awhile. i think of you...hoping all is well. let me know how everything is going.

hugs, kisses & lots of love

J.

(continued from page thirteen)

individual and also the ineffable collective death that the world is moving toward. What makes Jesus' offer of life real in this world of death is that those marked by Jesus live and die as if the worldly death has no claim on them, and they are actively initiating the signs of the kingdom to come. Not a kingdom on the other side of a nuclear holocaust, but God's Kingdom in His time and in His place.

To prevent the believer from an illusion of faith, the signs of God's Kingdom in the here and now are made explicit in the Gospels: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has annointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." Luke 4: 18-21. See also Luke 6: 20-36 and Matthew 25: 31-46. There are also others.

Our lives must be consumed with these means and goals of the Kingdom of God in the here andnow. The truth of these signs will bring the believer into direct confrontation with the world of death around them, even the total death that is now a reality. But the world's death should have no claim on us. Christians should be freed-up people who act and love even in the paralyzing reality of total nuclear death.

via pacis



Il 18 settembre 1978 venne emessa dalla FAO, l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite per l'Alimentazione e l'Agricoltura, la medaglia « AGRICOLA » per « onorare Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti in riconoscimento dei suoi cinquant'anni di dedizione al miglioramento delle condizioni di vita delle popolazioni rurali in ogni parte del mondo ».

Le medaglie AGRICOLA (nome latino per agricoltore) vengono coniate dalla FAO — l'Organizzazione delle Nazioni Unite per l'alimentazione e l'agricoltura — per onorare « uomini del nostro tempo che hanno dato un importante contributo verso il raggiungimento dei fini del programma PANE PER TUTTI della FAO ».

La prima delle medaglie AGRICOLA ha onorato il Dr. Julius K. Nyerere, Presidente della Repubblica Unita di Tanzania, la seconda il Dr. B.R. Sen, già Direttore Generale della FAO e fondatore del programma PANE PER TUTTI. Quella di Monsignor Ligutti è la terza medaglia.

On 18 September 1978 the AGRICOLA medal was released by FAO, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, to « honour Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti, in recognition of his fifty years of dedication to the improvement of the quality of life of rural populations throughout the world ».

The AGRICOLA (Latin name for farmer) medal was instituted by FAO — the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations — to « honour men of our time who have made important contributions to FAO's Food for All goal ».

The first FAO AGRICOLA medal featured Dr. Julius K. Nyerere, President of the United Republic of Tanzania; the second one was issued to honour Dr. B.R. Sen, former Director General of FAO, founder of the Food for All program. The Monsignor LIGUTTI medal is the third one.

We are very proud that our Msgr. Ligutti should be so recognized. He is a credit to the diocese and all who have come to know him and love him. Keep him in your prayers, especially now that he is not in the best of health.

Into this world, this demented inn, in which there is absolutely no room for Him at all, Christ has come uninvited. But because He cannot be at home in it, because He is out of place in it, His place is with those others for whom there is no room. His place is with those who do not belong, who are rejected by power because they are regarded as weak, those who are discredited, who are denied the status of persons, who are tortured, bombed, and exterminated. With those for whom there is no room, Christ is present in the world. He is mysteriously present in those for whom there seems to be nothing but the world at its worst . . . It is in these that He hides Himself, for whom there is no room.

Raids on the Unspeakable
Thomas Merton

via pacis

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